# The House

*What to handle before anything is decided*

Your attorney handles the estate. This page covers the house, a short list of practical things worth doing early, before anyone decides whether to sell. Several of these are worth raising with your attorney first, and none of it is legal or tax advice.

**Your attorney:** _____ **Phone:** _____

**01** **Tell the insurance carrier the house is unoccupied.**
Most homeowners policies treat a vacant home differently, and the coverage everyone assumes is in place may not be. *Tell your attorney what the carrier says.*

**02** **Leave the heat on.**
The utility bills cost far less than one frozen pipe. Keep power and water running until someone decides otherwise.

**03** **Write down who has a key.**
Neighbors, cleaners, the lawn service, family, someone from years ago. Once you have the list, you can decide whether the locks need changing.

**04** **Stop the mail, and keep the yard up.**
A full mailbox and long grass tell the whole street the house is empty. Whoever mowed it before is usually glad to keep going.

**05** **Photograph the rooms before anything moves. Then don't clear anything out yet.**
Belongings can be estate assets, and this is what families argue about most. Photos taken before the first box leaves settle arguments that otherwise have no answer. *Ask your attorney what has to be inventoried first.*

**06** **You'll get letters and calls offering to buy the house quickly. You don't have to answer any of them.**
Probate filings are public, so the offers start early. None of them are urgent and none of them expire.

**07** **You don't have to decide about selling.**
You may still need a value for the estate. That is a separate question from whether anyone sells. *Your attorney or CPA will tell you which one you actually need.*

### WHAT I CAN HELP WITH

Pricing and value questions. Clean-outs and sorting. Repairs, contractors, and access. Getting a house ready to sell, or ready to keep.

### WHAT I DON'T DO

Legal advice. Tax advice. Anything that belongs to your attorney or your CPA. I'll tell you so every time, and I'm glad to be the one who calls them.


## Geoffrey Serdar

Serdar+Partners at Compass · 952-258-3100 · LakeMinnetonkaProbate.com

360+ families served · 14+ years · Carver and Hennepin counties



Geoffrey Serdar is a licensed real estate agent in Minnesota and is not an attorney or an accountant. Nothing on this page is legal or tax advice, and it is not a substitute for the guidance of the attorney representing the estate. Compass, 401 Lake St E Suite 200, Wayzata, MN 55391.